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SCHAKOWSKY JOINS EFFORT TO PASS NATIONWIDE MORATORIUM ON DEATH PENALTY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined members of Congress, victims, and advocates to call for a nationwide moratorium on the death penalty.

The news conference was organized by U.S. Representative Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), chief sponsor of the Accuracy in Judicial Administration Act of 2000 (AJA). Schakowsky is an original cosponsor of AJA. This legislation would institute a national moratorium on the death penalty until inmates have had the opportunity to explore potentially exculpatory DNA and other evidence.

"The State should not be in the business of killing people, and most certainly, innocent people. A national moratorium on the death penalty is about due process and moral leadership and responsibility," Schakowsky said.

"With today's advancements in science, how can we be certain that inmates on death row are guilty if they are not allowed access to the latest technology that can prove their innocence? Let us use the power of science to save a life instead of taking it away," Schakowsky added.

Since 1977, the State of Illinois has taken the life of 12 death row inmates. During that same period, the state exonerated 13 people on death row, including 4 in the last 15 months. As a result, Illinois Governor George Ryan has halted all executions until a panel can review the capital conviction process.

"I applaud Representative Jackson for his leadership on this issue and for putting forth this legislation. It is a fair and objective approach," Schakowsky said.